



LIVING OUR VALUES

INNOVATIVE

DARING

RESPECTFUL

OPEN

BR/2020/04  
TOGETHER  
FOR WHAT  
MATTERS

Brief for the position of  
**UNIVERSITY  
SECRETARY**



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# A WARM WELCOME

# WELCOME MESSAGE

**from the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Julie Sanders**

Dear candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of University Secretary at Royal Holloway. This is a pivotal moment for the University as we shape our long-term future through our RH2030s strategy and continue to strengthen the governance and leadership that underpin our ambitions.

As Vice-Chancellor and Principal, I am proud to serve alongside dedicated colleagues, working “together for what matters” across our academic and Professional Services teams, as well as an astonishing global network of students, past, present and future.

We are striving to be a University of Social Purpose, committed to making a positive impact locally, nationally and globally. It is my privilege to be part of a community where colleagues and students are involved in such a phenomenal range of innovative activities – from creative educational opportunities to discovery-led endeavours in our performance spaces, studios and research laboratories.

Across our beautiful leafy campus in Surrey and our expanding central London spaces – where we are developing our portfolio of industry-facing programmes and building our partnership work as a member of the globally recognised University of London federation – there is great opportunity ahead of us.

The role of University Secretary is central to this next chapter. As the institution’s principal governance professional, you will be responsible for ensuring that Royal Holloway meets the highest standards of corporate and academic governance, supporting transparency, academic freedom, lawful freedom of speech and effective decision-making. You will work closely with Council, Executive Board and Academic Board, fostering constructive challenge and clarity of accountability that enable the University to progress with confidence.



We are seeking a collaborative and forward-thinking leader with deep expertise and experience in governance, regulatory compliance, and organisational assurance. You will be someone who thrives in a complex environment, can provide credible, trusted advice to senior leaders, and can help us strengthen the frameworks, processes and culture that support good governance and enable strategic transformation.

The University Secretary will lead the Vice-Chancellor’s Office, Governance Office and Legal Services with authenticity, professionalism and integrity; champion our values of Daring, Innovative, Open and Respectful; and help ensure our decision-making supports the success of our whole community.

We are hugely ambitious for the future of Royal Holloway and for all that our brilliant students and colleagues are capable of. I hope you will want to join us and help shape this journey, and I look forward to speaking with you about the opportunity.

**Julie**

Professor Julie Sanders  
Vice-Chancellor and Principal

# OUR HISTORY

Today's Royal Holloway is formed from two colleges, founded by two social pioneers, Elizabeth Jesser Reid and Thomas Holloway. They were among the first places in Britain where women could access higher education. We have gone from strength to strength and are now proud to offer inclusive education and research to over 12,000 students across our two sites in Surrey and central London.



Elizabeth Jesser Reid



Thomas Holloway



Jane Holloway

Original colleges founded by social pioneers, Elizabeth Jesser Reid and Thomas and Jane Holloway.

• **1800s**

• **1886**

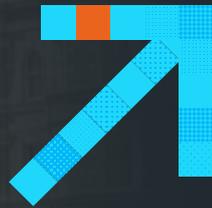
• Royal Holloway's iconic Founder's Building was opened by Queen Victoria, allowing the use of 'Royal' in our title.

• **1900**

We joined the University of London.



Queen Victoria



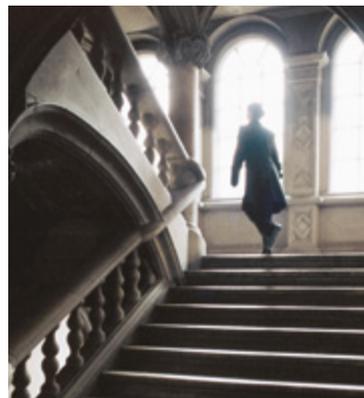
History shows that we have been brave from the very beginning. Royal Holloway and Bedford Colleges established an environment that was enabling for those who dared to step beyond what society laid out for them.



**Professor Julie Sanders,**  
Vice-Chancellor and Principal

Both colleges became fully co-educational.

**1965**

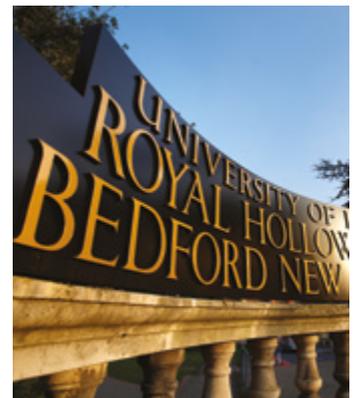


Emily Wilding Davison building in Egham is opened by Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, Chancellor of the University of London.

**1985**

Bedford College and Royal Holloway merged.

**2017**



**2024**

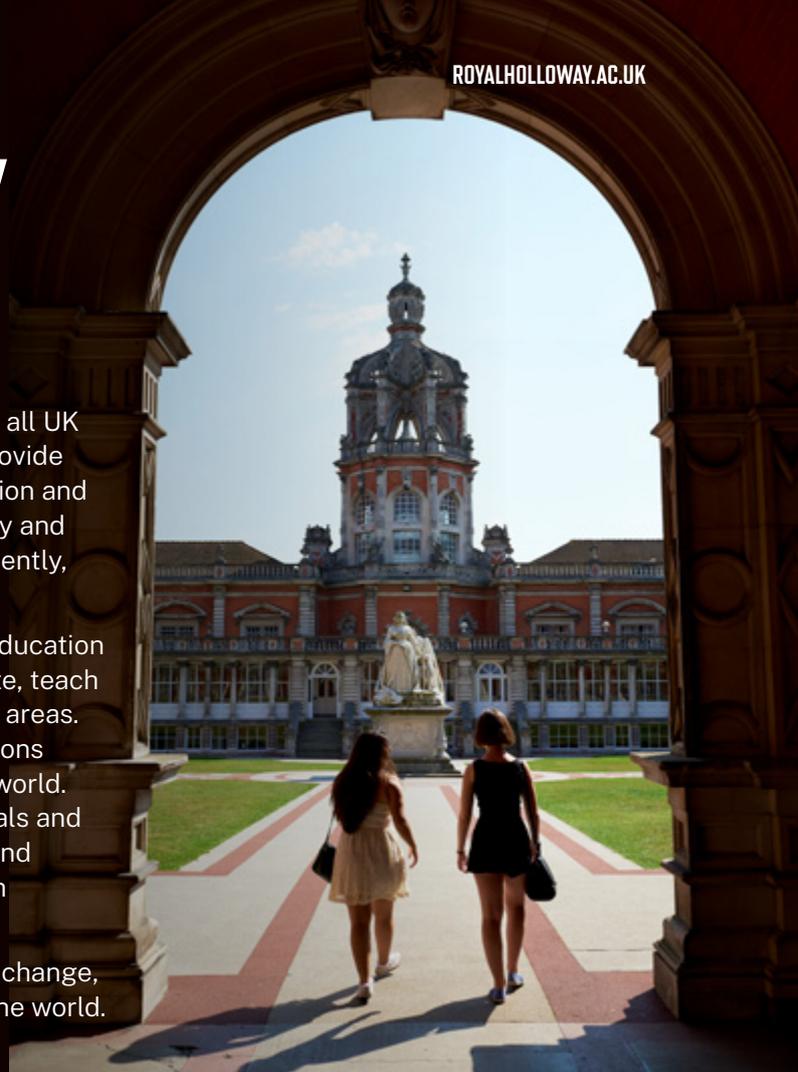
We celebrate the 175th anniversary of the founding of Bedford College.

# ROYAL HOLLOWAY IN NUMBERS

Royal Holloway, University of London, is in the top 35 of all UK universities\*. We were founded in the 19th century to provide equity in opportunity, to transform lives through education and create positive change – doing this with bravery, curiosity and care. We have the courage and conviction to think differently, providing a platform to challenge conventions.

With combined and integrated strengths in innovative education and transformative research, we have a passion to create, teach and share knowledge in both established and emerging areas. Through our impactful research, we seek creative solutions to complex challenges to make a real difference in the world. We are a place for growth. We aim to empower individuals and transform lives through inclusive education, an active, and close-knit community, and partnerships that link us with local and global industry and culture.

We are a University of Social Purpose, creating positive change, for what matters – for our students, for society and for the world.



## TOP 25%

of all UK research in Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021



**15<sup>TH</sup>**  
**IN THE UK**

for the overall quality of our research outputs - Times Higher Education's (THE) analysis and rankings of the REF 2021 results (May 2022)



**32<sup>ND</sup>**

The Times and Sunday Times  
Good University Guide 2026



**41<sup>ST</sup>**

(UK), top 500 (world) - Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2025



**41<sup>ST</sup>**  
**IN THE UK**

in the category of 'International Outlook', Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2026 recognising our broader outlook as a global university



**12,699**

Students\*

**1,766**

International students



**11,260**

Undergraduate students

**902**

Postgraduate taught students

**537**

Postgraduate research students



**79%**

of recent graduates in graduate level employment or study\*\*



**115,917**

alumni of Bedford College, Royal Holloway College and Royal Holloway, University of London and Bedford New College worldwide



**2**

**CAMPUSES**

Surrey and Central London



**CONTRIBUTES  
£657.1M**

to the UK economy\*\*\*

\* Correct as of December 2025.

\*\* The Guardian University Guide, 2026.

\*\*\* Biggar Economics, 2019/2020.

# RH2030s: OUR UNIVERSITY STRATEGY

RH2030s outlines our ambitions reaching into the next decade and how we will respond to global needs and challenges, building on the incredible platform of outstanding research, education, and civic and global engagement that is already taking place at Royal Holloway and in the context of an ever-changing world.

Royal Holloway has a proud history of being at the forefront of social change, equality, and inclusion. Our RH2030s strategy aims to carry this ethos

forward with energy and ambition, helping us take advantage of emerging opportunities to make an ever-greater positive impact on the individuals and the communities we serve.

Our vision is to be a forward-thinking University of Social Purpose: one that is committed to enabling outstanding educational and student experience; research and innovation; and local and global engagement with partners to drive social change for a better, more inclusive future.

## Our Strategy



## Our Values

We are a values-led organisation, with a clear sense of who we are and what we stand for. Our values guide us in being a University of Social Purpose in all we do.

**Respectful:** An inclusive community built on kindness, trust and understanding.

**Innovative:** Relentlessly curious and ambitious.

**Daring:** Challenging ourselves and others to make a positive difference in the world.

**Open:** Working collaboratively with integrity, honesty, and transparency.

## Our Strategic Ambitions

### **Inclusive Education and Research**

We will be a research-intensive University that fosters ambition and innovation. We will provide our students and colleagues with exceptional opportunities to grow and lead, tackling global challenges through inclusive education and socially impactful research, and developing inclusive leaders for the future.

### **Skills for Choice and Opportunity**

We will provide tailored learning experiences that combine research and practical knowledge, fostering a supportive community where students and colleagues develop skills, confidence, and values to shape their futures and positively impact the world.

### **Civic Minded, Globally Engaged**

We will celebrate and build on our global community by connecting with our international alumni, and global and local partners across industry and other sectors. Our University will contribute to economic and societal wellbeing through world-leading research and by supporting and enabling our global student community.

### **Partnerships and Collaboration**

We will develop future-facing, inclusive partnerships that enhance our social purpose. We will utilise our global reach and our status as a University of London federation member to tackle societal challenges and improve the quality, scale, and relevance of opportunities for all those we work with.

## Our Areas of Strength

As a University of Social Purpose, we have identified five areas of interdisciplinary strength which thread through our work, from the skills that our graduates will be able to demonstrate to the world to the challenge-led research and impact we undertake with partners, locally and globally.

## Our Strategic Enablers

Our strategic enablers are the three core inputs that will contribute to the successful delivery of the RH2030s strategy. They will be embedded throughout our strategic ambitions and everyday activities.

### **Infrastructure for the Future**

We will provide adaptable, high-quality learning and research spaces, both physical and virtual, fostering a sustainable and inclusive environment. We will enable seamless, user-centred digital experiences and an environmentally sustainable infrastructure to support net zero targets and remove outdated spaces and technology.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

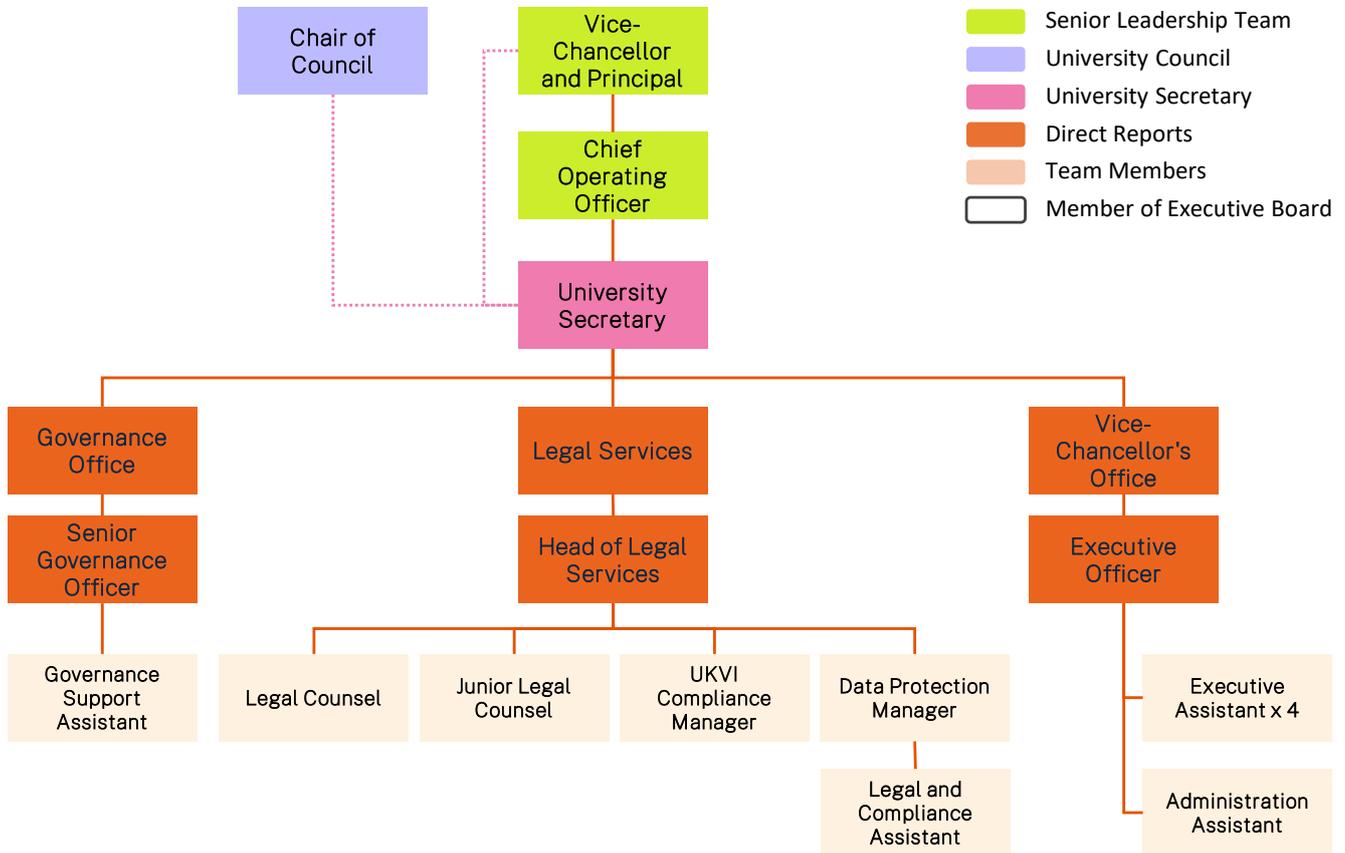
We will be one of London’s most sustainable universities, embedding environmental sustainability in all aspects of our operations and empowering our community through research, education, and partnerships to mitigate climate and biodiversity crises, and reduce our environmental footprint. We will empower our students, colleagues, and partners to be environmental game-changers, drawing on our creative strengths and leveraging the decarbonisation of our estate.

### **People, Culture, and Inclusion**

We will foster a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive community where everyone feels empowered and valued. We will inspire everyone to reach their potential and have a positive impact on both local and global communities.



# UNIVERSITY SECRETARY ORGANISATION CHART





# THE ROLE

## The role of the University Secretary

The University Secretary is the University's principal governance professional, ensuring the highest standards of corporate and academic governance consistent with the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Higher Education Code of Governance; ensuring we operate in line with our Statutes, Standing Orders and evolving practice within the Higher Education sector.

They will be responsible for developing and operating robust, holistic and efficient frameworks for Council and University governance that comply with the regulatory conditions required by the Office for Students (OfS), funding bodies and other regulators in the UK nations and which support effective and timely decision-making across the institution and ensure clear accountabilities for implementation and delivery of agreed actions.

The University Secretary enables Council to discharge its primary responsibilities, safeguards the integrity of delegations and decision making, and fosters a culture of transparency, lawful freedom of speech, academic freedom and constructive challenge across the University.

The University Secretary will cultivate strong relationships, and provide expert and specialist advice to Council, Executive and Academic Boards and their committees, and will nurture high standards of governance and effective interaction across the University. This includes ensuring all meetings, papers, minutes and reports are appropriate, accurate and provided in good time.

For Council business the University Secretary reports directly to the Chair of Council and has unfettered access to the Chair, the Vice-Chair and the Chair of the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee. For employment and service management, the line is to the Chief Operating Officer.

The post leads the Vice-Chancellor's Office, Governance Office and Legal Services fostering excellence, integrity, responsiveness and professionalism across all areas.



# KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

## Responsible to Council

- Serve as Secretary to Council, as set out in our Statutes; overseeing compliance with University Regulations, policies and governance structures, liaising with experts on legal compliance and ensuring meetings are effectively serviced, including by: ensuring meetings are appropriately scheduled to ensure the correct flow of business between committees; the efficient (and timely) drafting and circulation of agendas, Council/committee papers; accurate recording of decisions and actions; effective monitoring of actions and maintaining a calendar of business.
- Provide Council with reliable and well-informed guidance on its responsibilities to meet legal requirements and under the Charter, Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations and the policies and procedures of the University to which it is subject.
- Ensure the provision of expert and specialist advice to the Chair of Council and the Vice-Chancellor and Principal on all matters of University governance, identifying and suggesting workable solutions to issues that arise, and exercising judgement in line with University strategy and core values, alerting Council where proposed action exceeds power or breaches legislation/regulation.
- Work closely with the Chair of the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee to ensure effective internal audit arrangements are in place that provide review, requirements for improvement, and consequent assurance to Council and its sub-committees.
- Working closely with the Chair of Council and Vice-Chancellor and Principal to ensure the effective management and operation of Council business including regular review of Terms of Reference, Schedules of Business, Schedules of Delegation, effectiveness reviews, communicating decisions, monitoring actions and ensuring there is co-ordination of information between Council, Academic Board, Executive Board and other committees as appropriate.
- Advise Council and Executive Board on all relevant legal and regulatory compliance requirements, including but not limited to Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Information and Data Protection, and UKVI (Immigration) regulations. This would include commissioning independent legal advice for Council.
- Ensure systems are in place to support membership of Council and to allow for their contribution to be effective and align with our values and commitment to equality and inclusion e.g., nominations and election processes and inductions and skills audit, development, succession planning.
- Maintain high levels of integrity, confidentiality and flexibility and be able to liaise confidently with the Council members and the Senior Leadership Team. Maintain the Register of Interests. Foster high performing relationships through cooperation and good communication.
- Provide guidance to paper authors on board requirements, withholding or returning papers where routes are improper, or information is inadequate; escalating concerns to the Council or Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee where governance standards or regulatory compliance are at risk.
- Ensure publication of governing body minutes and governance information in line with regulatory expectations; manage communications of Council business to colleagues, students and stakeholders.

## Whistleblowing oversight

- Lead and maintain the University's whistleblowing policy, procedures, and practice, ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, promoting a culture of transparency, and providing assurance to Council on the effectiveness of reporting and investigation processes.

## Oversee effective reporting and engagement with relevant regulatory bodies

- Through appropriate delegated responsibility from the Accountable Officer (Vice-Chancellor and Principal), manage all relevant regulatory requirements and deadlines emerging from the Office for Students (OfS) ensuring liaison with all relevant teams across the institution on reporting requirements and consultations.

## Internal governance

- Lead the development and delivery of robust governance arrangements within the University, ensuring that the committee framework is adequate, effective and coherent, in line with statutory requirements and requirements of our regulatory bodies.
- Working closely with the Vice-Chancellor and Principal to ensure the effective management and operation of Executive Board business including regular review of Terms of Reference, Schedules of Business, Schedules of Delegation, effectiveness reviews, communicating decisions, monitoring actions and ensuring there is co-ordination of information between Council, Academic Board, Executive Board and other committees as appropriate.
- Ensure all other Executive and Academic Board related committees are effectively serviced and work efficiently with decisions and actions clearly documented and chased.
- Identify governance best practices across the sector and develop a clear, actionable plan to implement improvements within the University's governance framework.
- Oversee the provision of (and where appropriate provide) professional secretarial support, draft minutes/action logs and reports on behalf of committees, manage the flow of business and communicate information from committees as appropriate.
- Develop and manage effective internal and external working relationships and cross-team working with all stakeholders. Ensure a high standard of delivery and ways of working both through line management and matrix working.
- Use communications, briefings and development to maintain high levels of understanding of internal governance requirements and to support good levels of compliance.
- Engage with external bodies to ensure the Terms of Reference and activities of committees is informed by sector-wide requirements and evolving best practice.

## Legal Services

- Provide high level oversight of the Legal Services function, ensuring frameworks, policies, and advice align with institutional strategy, governance standards and regulatory obligations. This includes line management of the Head of Legal Services.

- Ensure effective systems and processes are in place to ensure appropriate compliance with Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Subject Access Request) legislation.

## Vice-Chancellor's Office

- Provide high level oversight of the Vice-Chancellor's Office which provides executive support to the Senior Leadership Team. This includes line management of the Executive Officer to the Vice-Chancellor, who manages the office team.

## Other duties

The duties listed are not exhaustive and may be varied from time to time as dictated by the changing needs of the University. The post holder will be expected to undertake other duties as appropriate and as requested by his/her/their line manager.

As a campus-based university, we believe campuses should be thriving environments for students and colleagues alike. Everyone has a part to play in active campus life. To this end, as a senior leadership team we are committed to a minimum 4-day a week presence on our campuses.

Whilst a large number of meetings and activity you may be involved with will be situated at Egham, there will be regular attendance required at the central London campus too.

Members of our Council are sometimes only available in evenings and at weekends; this means this role must be able to engage with them in this way as required.

## Internal and external relationships

The following list is not exhaustive, but the post holder will be required to liaise with:

- The Chair of Council.
- Members and committees of Council.
- Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Executive Board and Senior Professional Services leads.
- Executive and Academic Board committee members.
- Colleagues working across academic departments and professional services.
- Students and in particular representative student bodies including the SU.
- Relevant external bodies including but not restricted to the OfS, Universities UK, CUC, and AdvanceHE.
- Internal and external auditors.

# THE PERSON

## Person specification

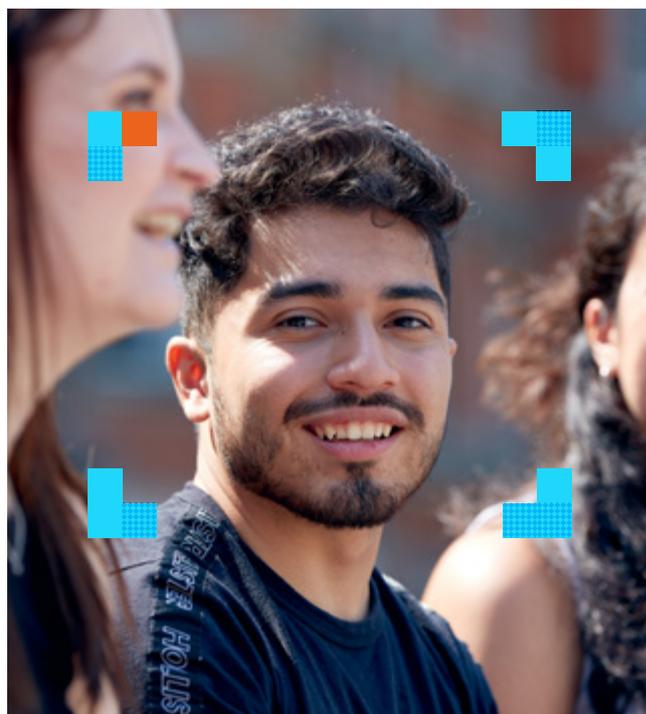
We are seeking a collaborative and values-driven governance leader who will champion Royal Holloway's commitment to integrity, transparency and accountability. You will bring deep expertise in corporate and academic governance, ensuring that our frameworks, decision-making processes and regulatory responsibilities are both robust and supportive of our wider institutional ambitions. Your leadership will reflect sound judgement, emotional intelligence, political awareness and the confidence to advise Council, the Executive and Academic Boards and senior colleagues with clarity, balance and independence. You will share our belief in constructive challenge, lawful freedom of speech and academic freedom, and will foster positive, trusting relationships across the University. Above all, you will combine strategic insight with meticulous attention to detail and inspire excellence across the governance and executive support functions.

## Knowledge, education, qualifications and training

- Educated to degree level and/or relevant professional qualification, or substantial relevant experience.
- Relevant training/qualification in governance or company secretarial best practice or relevant experience.
- Strong understanding of legal frameworks through formal legal training or qualification.

## Skills and abilities

- Excellent interpersonal skills with proven success in developing effective working relationships with senior colleagues and at all levels within the organisation, contributing to discussion and decision making.
- Highly effective influencing skills to work with all levels of stakeholders.
- Strong leadership and management skills, demonstrating effective decision making.
- High level of attention to detail and ability to be able to plan delivery of key objectives over multiple years.
- High levels of discretion and integrity, with the ability to handle sensitive information confidentially and act in the best interests of the University at all times.



- Political and organisational awareness, demonstrating sound judgement, tact, and the ability to navigate complex relationships and dynamics while maintaining ethical standards and impartiality.
- Effective line management skills, supporting colleagues to prioritise under pressure whilst maintaining a professional approach to senior colleagues and stakeholders.

## Experience

- Significant track record working in a governance function in a complex organisation.
- Experience in developing an effective strategy for servicing meetings, ensuring that business flows effectively and efficiently.
- Experience of coordinating and arranging large meetings, setting agendas and delivering complex minutes.
- Experience of managing and developing people at a range of levels including working in a matrix organisation, leading teams, line management and working with senior stakeholders.
- Experience on delivering changes to governance arrangements, working with stakeholders to deliver a required outcome.
- Experience of HE governance and understanding of HE policy environment.

## Other requirements

- Ability to communicate effectively and precisely to a range of stakeholders.

# HOW TO APPLY

Applications should be made at your earliest convenience but no later than **Friday 10 April 2026**.

To submit an application for this vacancy, you must follow the online application process for the role on the University's jobs page [jobs.royalholloway.ac.uk/](https://jobs.royalholloway.ac.uk/).

You'll be asked to register and set up an account on the site and can complete the application in stages. As part of the application process, you will be asked to submit a comprehensive CV and complete supporting statements based on key criteria that is measurable designed to provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate how your qualifications, experience and training are relevant to the role. You will also be asked to include the names and addresses of three referees, one of which must be your current manager. Referees will not be approached until the final stages and not without prior permission from candidates.

If you would like to discuss the role before applying, we can arrange an informal virtual conversation with Chief Operating Officer, Stephen McAuliffe, scheduled on **Friday 27 March 2026**.

To arrange this please contact [felicity.stringer@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:felicity.stringer@rhul.ac.uk).

If you are unable to apply online, please email your application to [recruitment@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@rhul.ac.uk).

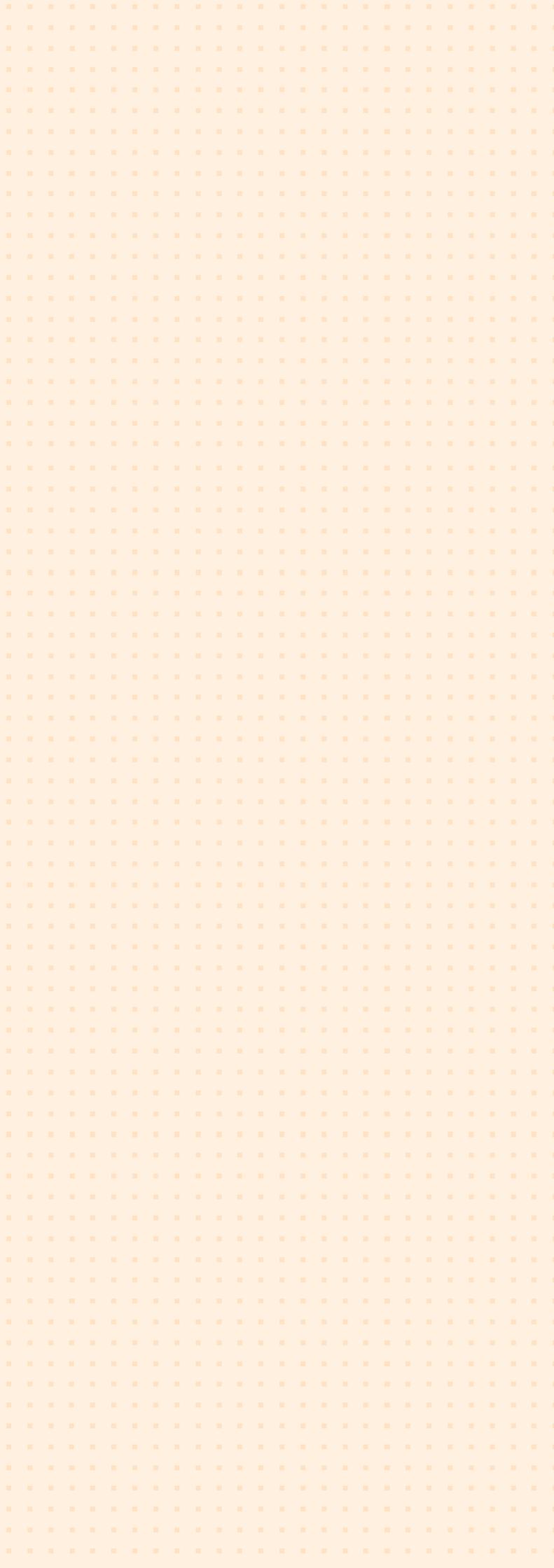
## Timeline

- Closing date for applications is **Friday 10 April 2026**.
- Prospective candidates will be invited to a brief screening call during the weeks commencing **13 April and 20 April 2026**.
- Final panel interviews and practical assessment at the University in Egham will take place on **Monday 11 May 2026**.





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